



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Winnemucca District Office  
705 East 4th Street  
Winnemucca, Nevada 89445

In Reply Refer To:  
(NV-026.8)  
4720.1

October 5, 1995

COMMISSION FOR THE PRESERVATION  
OF WILD HORSES  
255 W. Moana Lane, Suite 207A  
Reno, NV 89509

Dear Ms. Barcomb:

The current wild horse population in the Buffalo Hills and Granite Range Herd Management Areas (HMA) exceed Appropriate Management Level (AML) and short term utilization objectives for wild horses are not being met, indicating that the established AML is valid. A review of monitoring data outlined in the Buffalo Hills Grazing Season Review for 1993 and 1994 found that short term utilization objective for wild horses (use not to exceed 20% by 7/15) were not met in the Buffalo Hills and Granite Range Herd Management Areas (HMA) in 1994. In the Granite Range HMA, heavy use in 1993 and severe use in 1994 on the upper reaches of Wagon Tire Creek were attributed primarily to wild horses, and the 30% riparian utilization objective was not met prior to livestock turnout in 1994.

The Buffalo Hills Multiple Use Decision did not reduce livestock numbers, however it did require livestock herding to achieve short term utilization objectives. Livestock herding was implemented in 1993.

Enclosed are copies of the Buffalo Hills Grazing Season Review for 1993 and 1994, the August 1995 census, and a copy of the Livestock Management Decision from the Buffalo Hills Multiple Use Decision. If you have any questions, please contact Tom Seley at (702) 623-1500.

Sincerely yours,

*Peggy McAnuchian*

*for*

Sue Skinner, Acting Area Manager  
Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area

4/10/95



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Winnemucca District Office

705 East 4th Street

Winnemucca, Nevada 89415

IN REPLY REFER TO:

4120  
(NV-026.14)

April 10, 1995

Andrew F. Jackson  
P.O. Box 214  
Gerlach, NV 89412

Dear Mr. Jackson:

As outlined in the Buffalo Hills FMUD, I am sending the 1994 Buffalo Hills Grazing Season Review. If you have any questions please contact Leigh Redick at 623-1500.

Sincerely yours,

Bud Cribley, Area Manager  
Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area

cc: Nevada Division of Wildlife  
Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses  
Sierra Club  
Wild Horse Organized Assistance

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Winnemucca District Office  
705 East Fourth Street  
Winnemucca, Nevada 89445

In Reply Refer To:  
(NV-026.14)  
January 6, 1995

Memorandum

To: Sonoma-Gerlach Area Manager  
From: Leigh Redick, Range Conservationist *LR*  
Subject: 1994 Buffalo Hills Grazing Season Review

This was the second year using the terms and conditions set forth in the 1993 Buffalo Hills Multiple Use Decision. The appeals have not yet been settled, but management actions are still being implemented. A court date has been set for January 10, 1995 to hear the appeals. See the attached chronology for a list of actions and events that took place regarding the allotment in 1994.

Based on the winter horse gathers and an inspection of the Calico pasture, we decided to return to the grazing system this year. We felt that this would be beneficial for all the pastures, but especially the Buffalo Hills pasture, as this would have been its fourth consecutive year of use. In doing this we are treating it as if we are in the second year of the system so the Dolly Varden and Granite pastures continue to get the scheduled two years of rest.

**Monitoring Identified in 1993 FMUD**

**Key Area Monitoring**

Key Area utilization was measured on all pastures in April (4/6 to 4/8)) and in July (7/20 to 7/23). The Key Forage Transect method was used and results are on Tables 1 and 2. The Dolly Varden, Buffalo Hills, and Calico pastures were monitored in April to try to determine winter use of 1993 production. These results are questionable because there was new snow in many places making it difficult to find and identify representative key species. The Granite pasture was inaccessible due to weather conditions. Key Areas in all pastures were monitored at mid-season. The Calico pasture was measured for combined horse and livestock use and the other pastures for horse use alone.

The 20% use limit for rest pastures was exceeded in two pastures, Buffalo Hills and Dolly Varden. The Boulder Flat Key Area in the Buffalo Hills pasture received 41.8% use on STTH2/STWE, 30% on SIHY, and 43% on POSE. The Jones Flat Key Area had not reached the 20% limit, but was approaching it with 15% use on STTH2/STWE. The meadows near the head of Twin Springs Canyon had heavy use. Wild horses are frequently sighted in these areas when doing allotment inspections. Use at the other key areas in this pasture was very slight. Frog Creek also had very slight use.

The Potato Patch Key Area in the Dolly Varden pasture had also exceeded the 20% limit on four species - PUTR2 (49%), AGSP (31%), FEID (29%), and STIPA (23%). Use on the upper end of Wagon Tire Creek also had surpassed the limit and was already in the moderate to heavy category. Concentrations of wild horses are consistently seen in these two areas during distribution flights and on pasture inspections. Other key areas in the pasture had slight or no use.

Although the key areas in the Granite pasture had no apparent use, the higher meadows in the pasture were estimated to be close to the 20% utilization limit overall. Use on the meadows was not uniform, with some places within a meadow receiving heavy use while use at the other end of the meadow would be slight or none. Wild horses were observed in all the meadow complexes during this inspection and also during this summer's distribution flights.

### Use Pattern Mapping

#### Calico Pasture

Use pattern mapping was conducted in this pasture from July 10 to July 17. The mapping was done from a four wheel drive vehicle, on horseback and on foot, while camping in the pasture. Weather was mostly hot and dry. 52,285 acres were mapped using six utilization classes. 6270 acres of no use (12%), 28,021 acres of slight (53%), 9354 acres of light (18%), 5635 acres of moderate (11%), and 3006 acres of heavy (6%). This pasture was used from April 1 to about July 15 by 639 cow/calf pairs.

Overall use fell into the slight and light categories. Stipa spp., mostly STTH2 and STWE were the primary key species. Other key upland species measured when available were: SIHY, ORHY, FEID, and CHVI8. See Table 3 for a summary of the transects completed. The majority of use occurred from Division Peak south to Cow Creek. Use in this area ranged from moderate (60% on STTH2/STWE) to just barely heavy (62% on STTH2). The area around KFT #4 had been used by livestock, wild horses, and antelope. Bands of wild horses were observed in this area from Pipeline Spring north to Division Peak each of the five times I passed through the area. The upland use near KFT #5 was mainly wild horse use. No livestock or livestock sign was observed in this area except along the North Fork of Cow Creek. Along Cow Creek the majority of use was coming from livestock. The head of Donnelly Creek also had heavy use on the graminoids growing there. There was also heavy use on the aspen regeneration at the Donnelly Creek aspen stand key area.

The flats on the east and west sides of the Calicos were used early in the spring and showed slight and light use - probably because summer temperatures came early and stayed. As a result the cattle moved to the higher elevations and cooler temperatures sooner, Jacksons also reported that livestock were moving into Negro Creek in the Dolly Varden pasture about mid-June. They rode extensively to keep them in the Calico pasture until July 1. They had people riding on June 29 when they told me about the problems they were having. I felt that it was close enough to July 1 and that it would probably be better for the creek if they pushed the cattle to the higher country of the Dolly Varden pasture instead of trying to push them back into the Calicos and having them return to stay on the creek.

Although we had some problems with the pipeline at McCarty spring, utilization in the Donnelly Flat area was fairly uniform. Despite work by the Jacksons, water was not consistently flowing to all the troughs on the pipeline, so we could have expected less uniform use. There was light use on the STIPA and SIHY in this area.

Key Forage Transect #2 had light use on FEID. This transect was conducted in the bottom of a wide draw. By comparing the Carex spp. in this are to the Carex spp. in both the exclosures on the mountain, I estimated that there may have been slight use on it. Judging from the dead centers, the FEID, POCU, and STTH2 in this area look as if they have been heavily used in previous seasons. They appear to be recovering at this time. There was also a lot of young AGSP plants on the drier slopes above this draw.

I didn't get to inspect the southern part of the Calico Mountains, but from looking through binoculars and from helping gather cattle, I don't think a lot of use occurs there from livestock or wild horses. Some of the canyons and draws may receive use, but not much as a rule. This will be a place to check in the future.

### Dolly Varden Pasture

Arn, Dale, Rich, and I conducted Use Pattern mapping in the Dolly Varden pasture from October 24 to October 28. Mapping was done from a four wheel drive vehicle, from ATVs, and on foot while camping in the pasture. It was cool and windy with rain falling one day. Six utilization classes were used: No apparent use (0%), slight (1-20), light (21-40%), moderate (41-60%), heavy (61-80%) and severe (80-100%). 50,042 acres were mapped in this pasture: 25,650 acres of no use (51.2%), 7586 acres of slight (15.2%), 10,015 acres of light (20%), 6318 acres of moderate (12.6%), 350 acres of heavy (.70%), and 123 acres of severe (.30%).

The flats on the east side of the pasture received essentially no use from livestock or wild horses. The rest of the pasture received mostly slight, light, and moderate use. See Table 4. There were some areas of heavy and severe use at water sources and on stretches of Wagon Tire, Negro, and Red Mountain Creeks. Transects along major portions of the streams showed that use on willow species (SALU and SAEX) was in the slight and light range. The exception to this was along the Middle Fork of Negro Creek above the confluence with the North Fork for about 200 yards. This stretch of the creek is a natural crossing and watering spot due to topography. Upstream the creek flows through a notch with bluffs on either side. Downstream the creek becomes deeply incised and nearly impossible to cross. This causes both livestock and wild horses to follow the creek and cross in this section, thus increasing use levels. Use in the incised portion was spotty

with the majority of use falling in the light range because of accessibility. At the few downstream crossing use was usually higher. (All of this downstream use is on private land). The upstream reaches of Negro Creek had moderate use on graminoid species (JUBA, Agrostis, and Scirpus ) and light use on the willows. Use along here was higher than last year for probably two reasons: 1) The cattle used the Calico pasture early this year instead of the Buffalo Hills pasture. When the Calico pasture is used early livestock are pushed up Negro Creek during the mid-season move. 2) The hot early weather caused the cattle to move into the Negro Creek area earlier than usual. Severe use occurred along 2 stretches of Wagon Tire Creek. Both of these areas had exceeded the 30% use limit before cattle entered the pasture because of horse numbers. The permittees were instructed to ride these areas to keep livestock out. They rode extensively but the combination of animals still made severe use on the graminoid species. The lower end of Wagon Tire received slight use on willows and light use on JUEA. Due to the rocky nature of the streambed on the lower reaches, I don't believe that use higher than 30% on graminoids would hurt the stream. The system looked like it was functioning at the lower reaches. There was a high level of silt in it though. Red Mountain Creek had mostly light levels of use with use increasing near the mouth of the creek where it washes out into the flat.

Use on upland species, including PUTR2 and CELE3, was mostly acceptable on the whole pasture. At the Potato Patch Key Area use on STIPA was approaching 60% and at key forage transect #13 use on STTH2 was at 52%.

#### Other Monitoring

As outlined in the 1993 FMUD, Arn Berglund, Tom Seley, and I established key areas on streambank riparian areas. Mike Dobel (NDOW), Andrea, and Grover Jackson (permittees) were involved in the selection of sites on Wagon Tire and Donnelly Creeks. Rock, Granite, Cottonwood, and Negro Creeks also had sites selected along them.

Sites were selected to represent stream reaches for utilization monitoring and photo trend. We used the woody riparian trend method (from Montana) with a cover board to get baseline trend data on riparian shrubs. At each site we put in a red and yellow witness post, and rebar if monitoring shrubs.

Along Granite, Rock, and Cottonwood Creeks it was difficult to find reaches that would be directly influenced by cattle because woody species were dense enough to prevent or inhibit access to the channel. The sites selected on these streams were put in to represent the occasional openings found in the streamside thickets and not the entire stream. We felt that riparian shrub response in these openings would indicate success of the system or a place where management actions would need to be intensified.

Key areas along Donnelly, Negro, and Wagon Tire Creeks were placed in areas that represented a significant portion of the stream that would be directly influenced by cattle and wild horses. By utilizing stream survey photos and these key areas, we should get a good indication of riparian trend. Additional photo trend sites may need to be established as determined by the team.

Along with the riparian key areas, an aspen woodland monitoring site was established in the Calico pasture to monitor age class, vigor, and density.

A sage grouse strutting ground survey, determining the status of previously located grounds and the existence of new ones, was conducted in April by Mike Dobel of NDOW. This information is located in the wildlife section of the Dolly Varden pasture monitoring file.

Wild horse distribution flights were conducted in the Buffalo Hills and Granite HMAs.

A wild horse census was conducted in the Calico HMA. There were 160 adults and 49 foals in the Calico pasture portion of the Calico HMA.

### Monitoring Required for 1995

Use pattern mapping of the Buffalo Hills and Granite pastures for combined wild horse and livestock use.

Key area monitoring for wild horse use in rest pastures and prior to start of next growing season to evaluate the 20% and 60% use level objectives.

The Ecological Status Inventory has only been completed for the Calico and Buffalo Hills pastures. Completing it for the Dolly Varden and Granite pastures should be a priority in order to establish key areas. It was not finished this year because of fire season priorities.

Establish at least one mahogany savanna monitoring site in each pasture (Dolly Varden) in which mahogany occurs for age class and vigor. We could use the mahogany exclosure on Fox Mountain for this, as there is probably a lot of information on it already. We need to coordinate with the Susanville District to repair the exclosure.

Canopy cover transects for sage grouse were not established this year (they were supposed to be set up in 1993).

Key areas are to be established in each pasture for both upland and wetland riparian habitat by 1995. We may be able to set up key areas in the Buffalo Hills and Calico pastures with the available ESI data next year, but I doubt that the ESI data collected in the Granite range will be ready to use.

Continue to establish aspen woodland monitoring sites in the Granite and Dolly Varden pastures. The Banjo Key Area would probably suffice for the Granite pasture.

On the ground wild horse distribution mapping.

Key streambank riparian areas should also be established on Frog/Buffalo Creek and Cane Springs Creek.

## Implemented Management Actions

### Improve Livestock Distribution

In our preseason check of the Calico pasture Jacksons and I discussed grazing strategies in this pasture. They usually split their herd and push livestock to the east and west sides of the Calico Mountains on the lower elevations. As the weather warms the livestock will eventually drift to higher elevations. The cattle seemed to scatter quite well. When riding with the Jacksons during the mid-season move I noticed that there were no large concentrations of animals keged up in any one place. As we had discussed last year salt was placed in the Dolly Varden pasture to help draw cattle to places where use had been slight or not apparent. This may have helped a little, as use north of White Rock Spring increased from slight to light where the salt was placed.

The 30% use limit for riparian areas was exceeded on upper Wagon Tire and the south fork of Wagon Tire before the livestock grazing season. Jacksons were aware of the situation and were riding from the beginning of the season to keep from aggravating the situation. On August 30, Tom, Arn, and I inspected the Dolly Varden pasture with the Jacksons. Few, if any, cattle were sighted in the problem areas and we sent a letter to Jacksons instructing them to continue riding as they had been. They did report that it was easier to keep livestock out of the south fork of Wagon Tire this year, probably because it had dried up.

### Interim Management Plan

As stated earlier we felt we would get the most benefit from abandoning the second year of the interim plan and resuming the grazing system as if we were in the second year. This flexibility was stated in the 1993 FMUD. Following is a chart outlining the grazing system and where we presently are.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Calico</u>	<u>Dolly Varden</u>	<u>Buffalo Hills</u>	<u>Granite</u>
1993 (IMP)	Rest	Graze 7/16 to 10/15	Graze 4/1 to 7/31	Rest
1994 (Yr. 2)	Graze 4/1 to 7/15	Graze 7/16 to 10/15	Rest	Rest
1995 (Yr. 3)	Rest	Rest	Graze 4/1 to 7/31	Graze 8/1 to 10/15
1996 (Yr. 4)	Rest	Rest	Graze 4/1 to 7/31	Graze 8/1 to 10/15
1997 (Yr. 1)	Graze 4/1 to 7/15	Graze 7/16 to 10/15	Rest	Rest

### Projects

Projects identified in last year's annual narrative are still being worked on. Those include:

- Exclosure at the head of Donnelly Creek.
- Exclosures on Wagon Tire Creek.
- Developing Chicken and High Up Springs in the Dolly Varden pasture.
- A holding corral in the Dolly Varden pasture.
- Reconstruction of the Granite Mtn. drift fence, the Coyote Fence, and the C-2-N fence to antelope standards.
- Repairs on the exclosure in the Buffalo Hills pasture. (This is not a BLM exclosure).



In addition to last years list, reconstruction has been identified on two projects in the Calico pasture. McCarty Springs pipeline is not working, despite numerous efforts by Jacksons to fix it and Chicken Springs needs to be reconstructed.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

I still believe that this is an effective system for this allotment, and the results of monitoring data support this. The upper ends of Wagon Tire Creek were the areas of highest concern again this year. Use levels were exceeded along these stretches of the creek before livestock even entered this pasture. Herding seemed to be effective, but it is difficult to tell how effective due to the high horse numbers. Solutions for issues in this area should continue to be a high priority.

We were again conscious of bitterbrush utilization in the Dolly Varden pasture. Use levels ranged from 9 to 20% at the end of the season. There was some discrepancy between data collected in July and that in October on use of bitterbrush at the Potato Patch key area. Monitoring in July showed 49% use before cattle came into the pasture and October monitoring showed 20% use. As I was involved in collection of both sets of data I believe that there may have been some regrowth which could have masked the earlier utilization. This masking would not have been noticed at the other sites because they had very slight or no use. With these bitterbrush utilization levels, I think the grazing system will continue to produce positive results.

We have spent an increasing amount of time in this allotment and with this continued commitment we can discover and fine tune most of the rough spots in the grazing system. Particularly important is riding with the permittees during the pasture changes, as it provides an opportunity to see parts of the allotment that are not usually seen during regular allotment inspections.

Climate data is not yet available for this year, and will be included in next year's report.

Pasture	Key Area/Transect	Species	% Utilization
Dolly Varden	Crutcher Canyon	PUTR2	44
		STIPA	32
	Mahogany Troughs	PUTR2	0
		FEID	0
	Potato Patch	ELCI2	15
		PUTR2	25
SIHY		23	
Calico	Calico #1	STTH2	18
	Calico #2	STIPA	50
		FEID	35
	Black Canyon	STTH2	1
		SIHY	8
STWE		4	
Buffalo Hills	Jones Flat	STTH2	25
		SIHY	9
	Boulder Flat	STTH2/STWE	10
		SIHY	4
	Currant Canyon	STTH2	12.7
		SIHY	2
Stockade	STTH2	3	
	AGSP	5	
	SIHY	2	

**Table 1.** *Summary of Key Area Utilization Transects measuring use on 1993 production (collected 4/94). Transect forms are in the Key area section of the appropriate monitoring file.*

Pasture	Key Area	Species	% Utilization
Dolly Varden	Mahogany Troughs	CELE3	4.5
		PUTR2	0
		FEID	0
	Potato Patch	PUTR2	49
		AGSP	31
		FEID	29
		ELCI2	12
		STIPA	23
	Scraper Spring	FEID	9
		STTH2	3
Buffalo Hills	Stockade	PUTR2	0
		AGSP	0.9
		ELCI2	2
		BASA	0
		STTH2	0
	Boulder Flat	STTH2/STWE	41.8
		SIHY	30
		POSE	43
	Currant Canyon	STTH2	1
		SIHY	0
PUTR2		1	
Jones Flat	STTH2/STWE	15	
Granite	Wagon Tire	PONE3	0

**Table 2.** *Key Area Use at Mid-season (collected 7/20-7/22/94). Transect forms are included with this report.*

Transect	Species	% Utilization
1	STTH2/STWE	24.2
<i>Black Canyon</i>	SIHY	33
<i>KA</i>		
2	FEID	35.5
3	STWE	7
	POSE	10
	SIHY	14
4	STWE/STTH2	60
	CHV18	32
5	STTH2	62
6	ORHY	23.1
	SIHY	14
7	STTH2/STWE	14.2
<i>Calico KA #1</i>	FEID	22
8	FEID	53.6
<i>Calico KA #2</i>	STIPA	35

**Table 3.** *Key Forage Transects in the Calico Pasture (collected 7/94). Wild horse and livestock use. Transect forms are in the key area section of the monitoring file.*

Transect	Species	% Utilization	Transect	Species	% Utilization
1	SALU	10.9	12	STTH2	27.3
<i>Wagon Tire #2</i>	JUEN	38.8		AGSP	13
	SAEX	6.6			
2	GRAMINOIDS	SEVERE	13	STTH2	52
<i>Wagon Tire #1</i>				SIHY	45
	3	SALU	66	14	JUEN
4	SALU	27.3		SALIX	16
<i>Negro Crk KA</i>	SAEX	38	15	PUTR2	18
	GRAM	50		AGSP	28
				STTH2	29
5	AGSP	4			
	PUTR2	9			
	STTH2	24			
6	FEID	29.2			
<i>Scraper Spr. KA</i>	STTH2	30			
	SIHY	11			
7	PUTR2	20			
<i>Potato Patch KA</i>	SIHY	50			
	ELCI2	32			
	AGSP	42			
	STIPA	58			
8	CELE3	10			
<i>Mahogany Troughs KA</i>	PUTR2	10			
	FEID	30			
	STTH2	29			
9	ELCI2	21			
	SIHY	15			
	STTH2/STWE	15			
10	STTH2	10			
11	PUTR2	16			
	FEID	11			
	AGSP	1			
	STIPA	8			

Table 4. *Summary of Key Forage Transects in the Dolly Varden Pasture (collected 10/94). Monitoring wild horse and livestock use. Transect forms are included.*



7/26 Frog Creek fence meeting at Frog Creek to discuss possible fencing designs. Attending were:

Dawn Lappin	Cathy Barcomb
Brent Espil	Andrea Jackson
Grover Jackson	Ken Vissar
Steve Surian	Rob Jeffers
Willard Jones	Nadine Jackson
Leigh Redick	

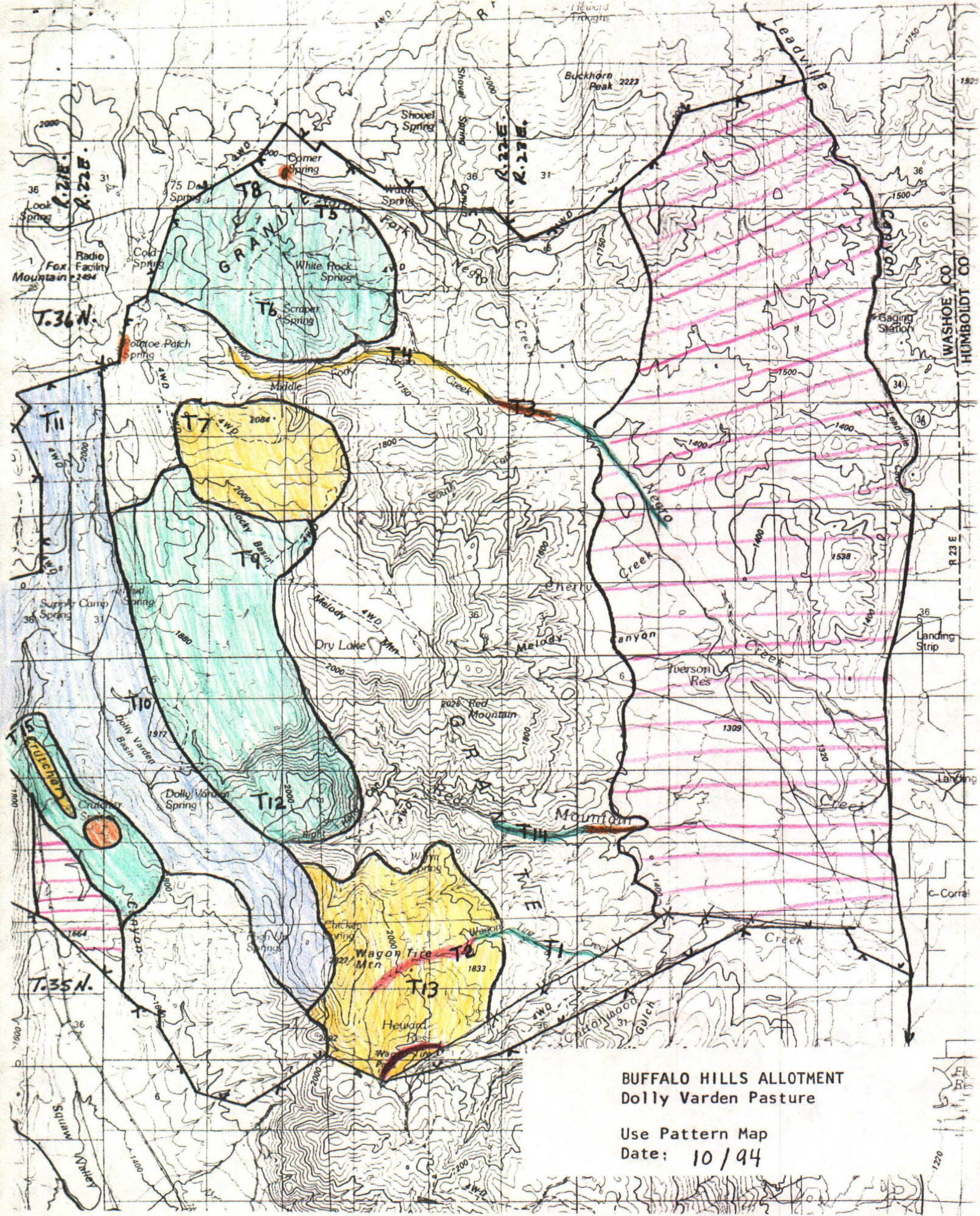
8/18 Buffalo Hills compliance check by Leigh. Trespassed six Bare Ranch steers near Mahogany Troughs.

8/19 Tom Seley wild horse flights.

8/30 Dolly Varden mid-season check. Arn, Tom, and Leigh from BLM and Andrea and Grover Jackson.

9/2 Letter sent to Jacksons informing them to continue riding Wagon Tire Creek in order to comply with the 1993 FMUD.

10/24-10/28 Use Pattern Mapping conducted in the Dolly Varden pasture by Arn, Dale and Leigh.

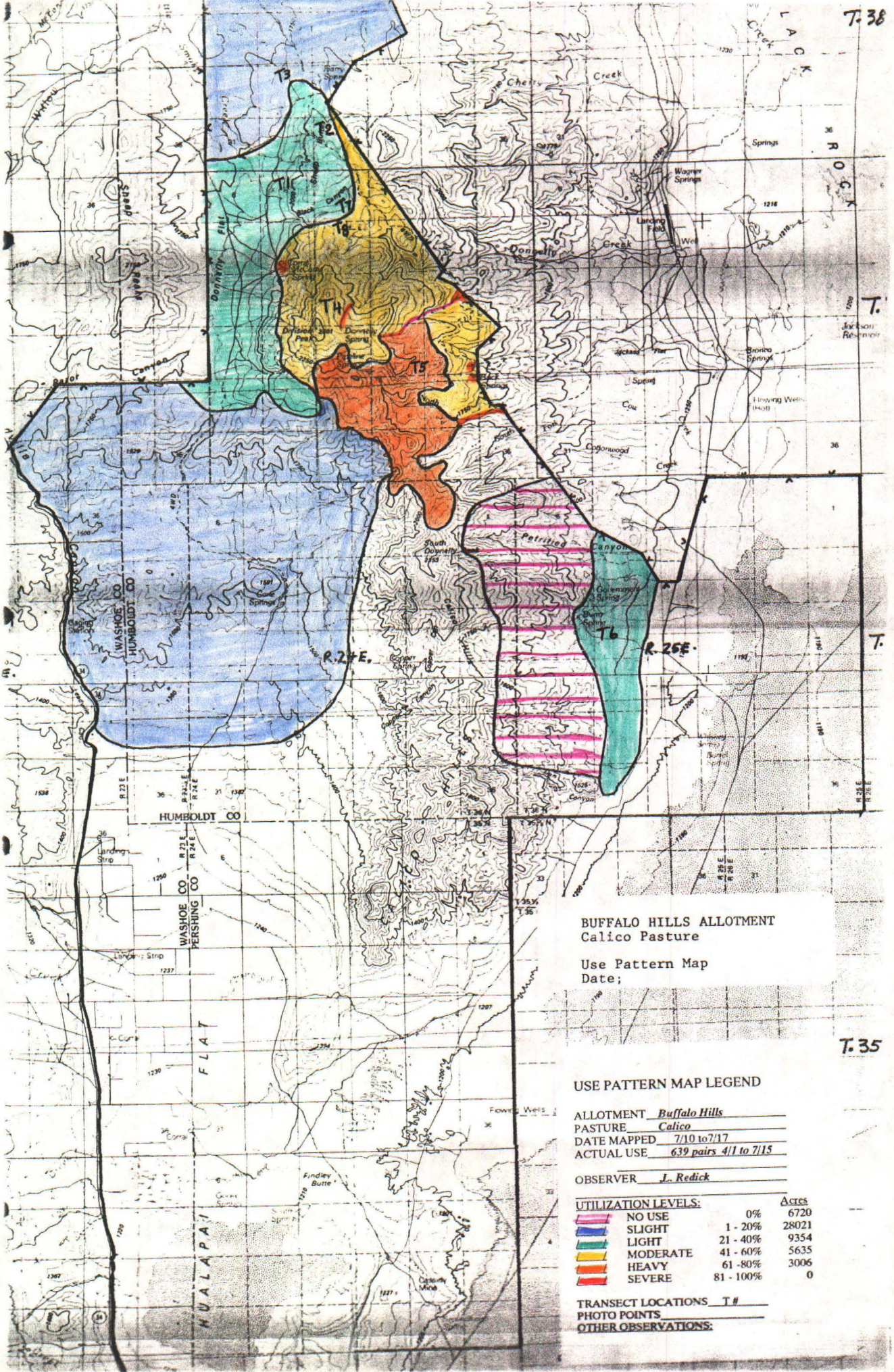


**BUFFALO HILLS ALLOTMENT  
Dolly Varden Pasture**

Use Pattern Map  
Date: 10/94







**BUFFALO HILLS ALLOTMENT  
Calico Pasture**

Use Pattern Map  
Date;

**USE PATTERN MAP LEGEND**

ALLOTMENT Buffalo Hills  
 PASTURE Calico  
 DATE MAPPED 7/10 to 7/17  
 ACTUAL USE 639 pairs 4/1 to 7/15

OBSERVER J. Redick

UTILIZATION LEVELS:		Acres
NO USE	0%	6720
SLIGHT	1 - 20%	28021
LIGHT	21 - 40%	9354
MODERATE	41 - 60%	5635
HEAVY	61 - 80%	3006
SEVERE	81 - 100%	0

TRANSECT LOCATIONS T #  
 PHOTO POINTS \_\_\_\_\_  
 OTHER OBSERVATIONS: \_\_\_\_\_